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Date: 2022-01-17

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  American University of Cyprus

- **Town: Larnaca**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Faculty of Arts & Humanities**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Design**

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

  Master in Landscape Design (MLD)

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A.   Introduction

On January 16, 2023, we, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC), together with Mr George Aletraris, The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), held an onsite visit at the American University of Cyprus (AUCY).

The visit took place from 9.00 – 18.00, and included the following items on the agenda:

•   Meeting with the Rector, the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, and the Director of Admissions & Marketing
– short presentation of the Institution, and the rationale behind the potential establishment of a new Master in Landscape Design

•   Meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC)
- short presentation of the role of the IEC in reviewing AUCY's programmes

•   Meeting with the Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the MLD programme coordinators
- short presentation of the Department, the mission and strategic planning (SWOT analysis) of the new MLD program, as well as the vision for the program
- short presentation of the MLD's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the program's design and development
- short presentation on methodologies and equipment used in teaching and learning (i.e. software, hardware, materials, online platforms, teaching material, evaluation methods, projects, samples of written examinations / thesis)

•   Meeting with students
- discussions of AUCY's standards and procedures

•   Meeting with members of the teaching staff
- short presentation of each individual, including courses to be taught, and research interests

•   On-site visit to the premises of the institution (including library, computer labs, sports facilities)

•   Exit meeting and brief discussion with Rector and Director of Admissions & Marketing

All meetings included time for the EEC to pose questions and to discuss the related themes, based on the 'Application for Evaluation – Accreditation Programme of Study', handed in by American University of Cyprus for the Master in Landscape Design (MLD), (dated June 2, 2022), and hereafter referred to as 'The Application'.

B. **External Evaluation Committee (EEC)**

Name	Position	University
Thomas B. Randrup	Professor	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
Sven Stremke	Associate Professor	Wageningen University, The Netherlands
Angeliki Paraskevopoulou	Associate Professor	Agricultural University of Athens, Greece
Marios Tsangaris	Student	University of Cyprus

C.   Guidelines on content and structure of the report

This section is divided into 6 assessment areas, which basically follows the structure of the Application. For each assessment area, we summarise with a short description of our findings, followed by a short list of strengths, as well as areas of improvement and recommendations. Finally, we state the compliance for each sub-area.

Assessment area 1: Study programme and study programme's design and development

Findings

In the Application, Section 11 (Application pp 24 ff), the internal regulations for quality assurance of the program is specified. The regulations describes the structures of the program validation process, referring to the academic rationale for the new program, the requirements for students as well as resources needed to provide the program.

The regulations sufficiently supports AUCY through its 2-phased structure for validating new programs, and subsequent procedures for amending existing programs. The purpose of assessment as well as the assessment process are specified, and the EEC believes that these processes do support teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in the quality assurance. Also, the policy ensures academic integrity and guards against intolerance or discrimination against the students or staff.

The regulations do not directly involve external stakeholders.

In the Application, Section B on the programmes content (pp 9-10), the programmes purpose, objectives and expected learning outcomes are specified. The overall aim of the MLD program is to *"provide education, research and training in landscape architecture in both urban and rural contexts, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and ecology. Innovation and quality in design are strongly promoted. The programme aims to cultivate a critical awareness of the multifaceted issues concerning landscape design, which stands at the intersection of wider environmental, social, technological and cultural concerns."* (Application, p. 9).

The MLD program is the first MSc program at the Faculty, and as such is indicating a new academic direction of the university. This initiative is in line with the AUCY overall ambition of becoming a regional research center, and is designed to involved the local, and regional communities.

The program is reflecting the Council of Europe's basic purposes for higher education, and is believed to enable a smooth student progression, including balance of exams and assignments, and related ECTS (for comments related to expected workloads and allocated ECTS, see also assessment area 2). The programme prepares for formal qualifications for practice in the field of Landscape Design / Landscape Architecture, or in academia.

There are formal procedures for the programme's assessment of students learning, knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills at the AUCY. The assessment program is believed to be generic for AUCY, but to include the means to be monitored in the light of the latest research within landscape architecture and landscape design. There are a system in place for periodic reviews, taking into account the needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, as well as student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme. The assessment procedures will involve students via standard

course evaluations, just as improvements to the assessment tools are suggested by external consultants and external examiners where necessary.

As this is a proposed new program, no formal public information is available at this time. When so, information related to selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, learning opportunities available to the students as well as graduate employment information should be included, according to CYQAA standards. Both students and staff should be involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

As this is a proposed new program, no formal information for managing the programme is collected, monitored and analysed. When so, information related to key performance indicators such as profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programmes, learning resources and student support available and career paths of graduates should be included, according to CYQAA standards. Both students and staff should be involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

At this time, the program and subsequent courses have all been developed by the staff (see assessment area 3). The students are projected to evaluate courses, and as such have an indirect involvement in the further development of the content of their studies. Involvement of external stakeholders in the development and assessment of the program is being considered, and is likely to be implemented once the programme is accredited, e.g. via the local municipality of Larnaca.

The EEC finds that the MLD programme content is consistent to, and responding to contemporary national and international challenges in society, e.g., climate change, biodiversity loss, and urbanization trends, and is well placed at the AUCY as a new addition to the university's portfolio.

As a 2-year (120 ECTS) programme, the MLD corresponds to the European Higher Education Area, as a part of the three-cycle higher education system consisting of bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies. Also, the proposed MLD is in line with the Bologna process, and thus facilitate student and staff mobility. The proposed grading / workload system refers to the European Credit Transfer and accumulation System (ECTS). See assessment area 2 for the EEC's recommendations towards the application of ECTS in the programme.

Coherence of the study programme is ensured via the program's coordinators active participation in all courses during the initial phases of the program.

The programme support student development via use of digital as well as analogue learning tools, special attention to non-native English speaking students, (e.g. via special language courses), and extensive use of group work.

Strengths

The proposed MLD programme is a well thought and comprehensively developed program. It addresses a theme of both local, national and international interest, and the EEC is convinced of the need for such a program in Cyprus, with relevance not only locally but also internationally. A strength in this regard is the AUCY existing relations to the wider region.

The EEC also regard the overall staff and initial program development for strong and convincing. As described in the following sections, there are some important items that need to be addressed, which is expected for an entirely new program to be developed. Overall, the EEC regard the proposed programme

for an achievement in its entirety. The EEC understands this program as an addition to the existing international community of landscape architecture programs, with a strong emphasis on landscape design.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
The EEC recommends:

• that a 'Board of Practitioners' be established specifically related to this programme. The Board should have as a key objective to discuss what matters in practice, and how this match with the academic developments at the MLD.
• that the programme coordinator is devoted full time, onsite presence during the programme's first two years, to secure that substantial overlaps between courses are avoided and to manage the overall content and development of the programme. Also, regular staff meetings should be held, presenting and discussing course outputs and course evaluations.
• that the use of group work is discussed and coordinated at programme level, to secure an optimum distribution of this type of learning, related to that of individual performances.

The EEC expects that the programmes policies become publicly accessible, once the program is accredited.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Not applicable

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

Findings

The MLD offers a variety of teaching methods (i.e. lectures, tutorials, individual/group assignments, etc), teaching tools (i.e. drawings, 3D-models, digital media), as well as assessment methods (i.e. design, sketchbook/herbarium, essay, exam, quiz, etc.). This variety offers opportunities to use methods that mediate potential learning difficulties, as well as support learning outcomes. Concomitantly students also develop a variety of skills. Furthermore, some of the teaching methods i.e. group activities, presentations, etc. support student-student social interaction as well as student–tutor interaction i.e. tutorials, both contributing to student's social development. The qualification of each individual teaching staff plays a key role in achieving this in close cooperation with the program coordinator, and others assigned with quality assurance as specified in the Application.

The teaching tools and material used in teaching are up to date, effective, and support the use of contemporary educational technologies. This provides students with the opportunity to choose between a comfortable" or "challenging" learning process.

Due to the young age of the University, the number of students is relatively small which facilitates a mutual learner-teacher relationship present at the present.

AUCY has procedures in place addressing student's disputes/complaints, but it mainly emphasizes student grievances about grades, and it is not clearly stated who takes the final decisions.

Courses are closely interconnected.

The MLD does not offer practical training *per se* (such as internships). However some of the courses, particularly the design courses (MLD 500, 540 and 600) offer practical training as the projects can constitute real case studies that can achieve both the planned learning outcomes and meet potential stakeholders' interest.

According to the Application (p. 25) "Assessment procedures are transparent, and the criteria and methods by which students' work is judged are made clear to students, staff and external auditors." These procedures have not yet been applied because the course has not started.

Students at AUCY are assessed and graded on each course undertaken based on the American Grade Point Average (hereinafter referred to as "GPA") grading system. In all courses (with the exception of MLD 640, 650 and 660) the grading is the same.

The course descriptions are not detailed regarding the teaching methodology and does not correlate to the assessment.

All courses have a minimum of two teaching staff that can potentially assess students. However, it is common practice that PhD students cannot formally assess Master students.

AUCY have procedures for student complaints, appeals and disputes in relation to academic matters, however mainly emphasizing student grievances about grades.

The EEC finds in relation to the MLD programme:

- that the individual course descriptions do not provide sufficient detail to assess how innovative the teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids are, and their related effectiveness.
- that there are no descriptions of formalized practical training (internships), which is in line with other similar programs.
- that there are discrepancies in some of the course descriptions. For example in MLD 660 stating it will begin in semester 3 and that the prerequisites are "at least 90 ECTS.
- that in MLD 650 and MLD 660, the terms 'Research & Design' are used. However from the description of MLD 660 it is stated that "the goal of the thesis is to develop a major landscape design project and a written dissertation. The primary mode of presentation of the design project is in the form of drawings, models, and various other media, presented in a public form". It appears that the term, 'Research' is used to describe the design process or literature study preceding the design process, which constitutes a Design Thesis (not Research & Design Thesis). On the other hand, MLD 650 describes the stages of conducting research.
- that the courses *MLD 650 Thesis & Major Design Tutorial,* and *MLD 660 Thesis & Major Design* complement each other that lead to the compilation of the final thesis.
- that the MLD is based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (referred to as "ECTS") and one credit unit corresponds to a student's 25-30 hours of work. In some courses, the EEC finds that the actual workload does not correspond to the assigned ECTS, e.g, in MLD 560 Visualisation and Digital Design – GIS, MLD 650 Thesis & Major Design Tutorial, and MLD 660 Thesis & Major Design.
- that all courses (with the exception of MLD 640, 650 and 660) have an equal grading.

Strengths
The programme offers a variety of teaching methods, teaching tools, as well as assessment methods.

The programme offers mutual benefits to both the students and the local stakeholders and thus the country's landscape.

The programme supports student-centered learning and teaching and provides an autonomy to students to choose between a comfortable" or "challenging" learning process.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
The EEC recommends:

- that it is ensured that within each course, the amount of hours per ECTS credit complies with the ECTS standards, and that the total amount of hours per week does not exceed 40 hours of work.
- that for the students to build on their personal portfolio, the total amount of credits allotted group work in the Design studios, does not exceed 20%.
- that in group work, students submit a signed sheet specifying each students relative contribution by percentage to the group work.
- that more detailed course descriptions should be developed and that teaching methodology and assessment corresponds across the program.
- that sufficient tutoring is provided throughout the Design Studio courses, (minimum of 30 min per week per student).
- that the grading of each course is tailored to each course.

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- that the disputes/complaints policy is supplemented with means to a final decision before a dispute /conflict reaches the Faculty Dean or the Rector and Vice-Rectors.
- to also use more conventional methods tools and materials that have not been described in any of the courses (including MLD 500 Landscape Design & Sustainability Studio I), such as freehand and perspective drawing.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Not applicable
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant

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3.   Teaching staff

Findings

Compliant with the standard about teaching staff competencies that is similar to many other HEI's (see application pp.14-15). During the start-up of the MLD programme, teaching needs are leading. Later, other factors will be considered as well (application p.15).

AUCY has established a clear system of academic staff development, referred to as Tenure Track (TT) system in the application (pp.15-22).

The qualifications of the (future) staff for which Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed, are adequate to realize the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. Five of the 13 listed teaching staff members (application table 4) hold a formal degree in Landscape Architecture (either BSc, MSc or PhD level).

The application comprises little information on how AUCY facilitates and monitors teaching staff training and development.

Teaching methods and technologies are *c*ompliant with many other HEI's and adequate for a MLD. The use of innovative analysis and visualization technologies may not be limited to the courses dedicated to those technologies but ought to be applied throughout the design studios, as stipulated in the Application.

There is relatively little information about the required qualifications of future visiting teaching staff in the Application, apart from the part-time staff members. However, the EEC is convinced that the existing broad international network of the future staff members can facilitate the attraction of recognized landscape architect to teach temporarily in the MLD programme.

The Application lists an adequate number of future teaching staff to fulfil the objectives of the MLD programme.

The teaching staff is adequate both in terms of level of qualifications (PhD) and expertise. The role of selected experts from other disciplines, for example in the Planting courses, is to be applauded. However, no more than four of the 13 (future) teaching staff is/will be hired on a full-time basis. Of those four, only one staff member (Christina Musacchio) has a landscape architecture degree. The programme expressed the goal of getting formally accredited by IFLA Europe. This particular accreditation would require the programme to comply with e.g. a minimum of three full-time teachers with degree in Landscape Architecture. As such, the programme does not fulfill the Cypriot requirement of a 70/30 distribution of full time / part time staff (4 full time, 9 part-time are listed in the Application, Table 4).

The MLD application comprises a list of 13 teaching staff members (Table 4) which the EEC considers employees of AUCY. There is little to no information about future visiting staff in the application.

It is expected that the teaching staff will comply with the standard about collaboration as most of them have a strong track record of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration. The Application clearly states the ambition to collaborate with local/national stakeholder in several courses.

Both the Application and the interviews evidence that the important link between education and research is acknowledged. The EEC recognizes that the operationalization of scholarly activities focusing on synergies between education and research is in progress.

Publications of teaching staff are mostly adequate for the programme's courses. The publication profile of some of the more junior (future) staff members are not 100% in line with their perspective courses but there might be additional publication in preparation/review that align well.

The MLD application falls short on proving a clear overview of the intended time distribution between teaching and research activities.

Strengths
Ten of the 13 listed staff members have a PhD and the other three are listed as PhD candidates. This high percentage of PhD holders is adequate for an international University and to be applauded.

The Application, in many places, illustrates the student-centred philosophy of AUCY and there is clear evidence, both in the Application and during the interview with students, that teaching is considered the core business of the University.

The teaching staff publications are adequate for the programme. Some teachers have a different, not landscape architecture related professional background and expertise.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
The EEC recommends:

- that AUCY makes sure that the initial set of teachers can, in due time, also comply with the expectations on research and academic publications.
- that transparency of the academic development program increases via qualitative descriptions of requirements (e.g. for publications), accompanied with some kind of quantitative component (e.g. x number of peer-reviewed articles in international journals). Provided that AUCY is a new University, it is also recommended to monitor and evaluate the staff development program(s) after a period of no longer than 5 to 6 years (after the first full cycle).
- to further increase the share of teachers with recognized degrees in Landscape Architecture to make sure that the students are taught by Landscape Architects in the majority of the ECTS credits. In any case, it is recommended that the design studios are coordinated and supervised by experienced teachers with landscape architecture degrees, as it is now foreseen in the application course descriptions.
- that AUCY accompany their staff development programmes (e.g. Tenure Track) with the required resources (time and funding) for staff to actually participate in professional and teaching-skills training and development.
- to further clarify what information on teaching is needed, to improve clarity as well as transparency of the promotion process by e.g. requiring candidates to summarize their course evaluations including their individual assessments, students success in e.g. design competition or exhibitions (as a proof of excellence) and evidence how they continue developing their teachings skills.
- for AUCY to consider periodically allocate additional funding for teaching staff to innovate teaching methods and the use of new technologies.
- a further detailing of teaching methods, time allotted for each teaching method and staff in the course descriptions, to help to improve transparency for both teachers and students. Details should also cover the different responsibilities that staff members may have in, for example, a design studio (i.e. course coordinator, teacher, teaching assistant/tutor, others).

- to increase the share of full-time Landscape Architects in the teaching team and, in this process, reduce the now high share of part-time staff. This recommendation is independent from whether or not the MLD will undergo an IFLA accreditation.
- to facilitate and monitore both collaboration with partners and synergies between teaching and research. This will help to create healthy and inspiring working conditions while making sure that students are exposed/participate in innovative forms of (design) research.
- To make more explicit reference to the three main types of (design) inquiry described by e.g. ECLAS - research for design, research on design, research through/by design – in the programme and course descriptions.
- To include an indication of hours allocated for teaching versus research in the academic profiles for the different levels of Tenure Track, and to monitor the alignment between teaching hours supply (by the staff) and demand (by the courses).

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
Findings

The Head of Admissions and Marketing, together with its team, have a well-organised and effect full organization, responsible for the recruitment and admissions of all students at AUCY. This includes assessment of quality of applications and accepted offers (Application, p. 53). Section 5 (p. 10), in detail explains the pre-defined regulations regarding student admission, which are in line with standard requirements.

The program is envisioning a Bachelor degree as the primary entry criterion. The EEC sees a potential conflict between the admission of any bachelor degree, and the timely and successful completion of the MLD.

AUCY has a Student Advisor, providing information to students relating to the programme (e.g., admission policy, regulations, exams and class schedules) (P. 53). The Student Advisor's also refer to student's progression in ensuring that all necessary conditions exist for all the students to accomplish their academic goals and reach their full potential, while also contributing to the creation of a vibrant and beneficial community within the University (p. 53).

In the program itself, we see some discrepancies concerning the progression among the individual courses. E.g., the description of MLD 500 Landscape Design & Sustainability Studio taught in semester 1, states that "After completing this studio, students will be able to:……Build and use 3-D actual and digital models…", while the course MLD 660 Visualisation and Digital Design – GIS is taught in semester 2.

On p. 9, the student admission requirements are listed (see also section 4.1). The Application does not state any specifics related to student recognition, but the EEC does not have reason to expect that e.g. the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) is not being respected. The LRC aims to ensure that holders of a qualification from a signatory country can have adequate access to an assessment of the qualification in another country in a fair, flexible, and transparent way.

A formal Cetificate will be awarded to successful students, and a final transcript (p. 34) will be provided. The EES assumes the final transcript includes brief information related to the achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.The students prior education and competences are appropriately assesses via the suggested admission criteria, which are in line with international standards for similar types of Master programs.

Strengths

The AUCY has relevant standards for student admission and processes in place.

A student advisor is in place to support students to accomplish their academic goals and reach their full potential.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
The EEC recommends:

- That the required Personal Statement as a part of the student admission criteria, is supplemented with a portfolio, documenting each candidates design and/or other creative skills.
- That students upon entry provide evidence of the needed skills required in the MDL programme, e.g. in relation to visualization skills (AutoCAD and ArcView and GIS knowledge), basic design thinking, and landscape knowledge. In order not to lower the academic ambitions of the program, an alternative would be to offer supplementing courses prior to formal admission to the MLD.
- That students admission procedures are formally referring to the application of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC).
- That a systematic progression among courses' learning outcomes is developed.
- That it is formalised that the final transcript includes brief information related to the achieved learning outcomes on programme level, the context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed, and that this document is accompanying the Certificate awarded to successful students.

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Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Partially compliant
4.4	Student certification	Partially compliant

5.   Learning resources and student support

Findings

AUCY largely complies with the standard about teaching and learning resources with regards to general academic education. Students will be able to request publications that will be sent to them within 24hrs (via one of the affiliated Universities in Lebanon).

There is room to accommodate changing student numbers. To what extent and in what direction (increase/decrease of student number) this flexibility is institutionalized is not revealed in the application.

AUCY campus and its main facilities are located in a recently renovated set of buildings. The University library is currently under renovation and will be expanded. The EEC acknowledges the plans of AUCY to create a cafeteria/restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating at the seaside part of the campus, together with safe access to the beach/water in the near future. Furthermore, the EEC noticed that several bus stops are located in walking distance of the main campus, and that there are designated bicycle lanes. However, with increasing student numbers the safety of pedestrians and cyclist ought to be improved by investing into the areas around the bus stops.

All resources appear to be fit for purposes at this stage for general academic education and there are plans in place on how to accommodate the special disciplinary needs of students of the programme in due time. Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.

Students are informed about the services available to them.

Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.

Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.

Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported. There are agreements in place with several international Universities for student exchange.

Strengths

There is clear evidence both in the application and during the EEC interviews that student-centred learning and flexibility are of key importance to both the University and the teaching staff of the programme. The current situation of AUCY enables close contacts between teaching staff and students which has been stressed positively during the interview with AUCY students from other programmes. The same accounts for the teacher's flexibility to account for (un)foreseen changing circumstances and needs of the students. It is suggested to keep investing and monitoring student-centred learning and flexibility in the future.

The EEC applauds the ambition of AUCY to expand study space and prepare room(s) dedicated to landscape design classes in general and design studios in particular. MLD staff has many experiences on this topic from other (leading) Universities which can provide guidance for the development for dedicated studio rooms at AUCY, often referred to as Ateliers.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
The EEC recommends:

- That students get access the advanced academic research platforms such as Scopus and Web of Science, to be able and conduct, for example, comprehensive literature reviews and literature-driven case study research.
- that strategies for both hybrid and remote classes in place, provided by the experience of the Covid 19 pandemic over the past two years.
  that, once the programme is fully established and running, a healthy balance between teaching and research activities is facilitated by the dean, head of department and programme coordinator. The EEC stresses the latter because the strive for excellence in academic research may, at times, have implications on the teaching services.

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6.   Additional for doctoral programmes

This evaluation concerns the establishment of a Master program. The Application and subsequent interviews did not signal any intentions to develop a PhD program in the near future, and therefore this section will not be covered under this evaluation.

D.   Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC congratulates the AUCY with a well-structured and very professional application for accreditation of the new MLD programme. We have made this assessment to the best of our abilities and within the allocated timeframe of one working day, respectfully acknowledging the dedication and amounts of resources being put into the Application.

We would like to acknowledge the AUCY for seeing the opportunities to expand as a university within the landscape field. It is a timely choice, and there exist a great need for the many aspects of landscape design, as also expressed in the Application. Reading the Application, it seems evident that the proposed program has potential to become a full contributor to the existing, international landscape educational system.

A strong argument for developing this new programme seems to be the potential development in and around Larnaca. While it is vital for a programme as the suggested to closely align locally, and to see opportunities in a foreseen new market, we would also emphasise the need for the proposed programme to sufficiently deal with the existing landscape as something to be preserved and protected, as well as being developed. This would actively embrace other territories on the island and outside.

The AUCY has a clear international flair and atmosphere, which we see as a great opportunity and a strength to the new programme. The international perspective of scholars, academics etc. encourage exchange which is much needed for solving many of the contemporary global challenges. While AUCY has a clear international perspective, it also invest in the local community, which should be acknowledged and appreciated. From a landscape perspective, the initiative and related investment made by AUCY can be viewed as an investment into future landscape planning, design and management of the Cyprus landscape, via the future landscape architects as potential drivers of a changed Cyprus. Furthermore, the prospected graduates will contribute to safeguarding Cyprus' landscape and also expedite the potential to develop a national Cypriot association of landscape architect, acknowledged by IFLA.

In the Application, the proposed program is called Master of Landscape Design, which is an appropriate name. However, as the programme, and related courses in its entirety relates very much to many of Europe's existing landscape architecture programmes, we suggest the AUCY consider to change the name to Master of Landscape Architecture. Such a 'MLA' name would also ease recognition of its alumnies y professional organisations, such as ETEK Cyprus. As of now, the program has a clear design focus, but has potential to change or be complemented with stronger emphasis on planning or e.g. management aspects at some stage.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Thomas B. Randrup	
Sven Stremke	
Angeliki Paraskevopoulou	
Marios Tsangaris	

Date: 2022-01-17

Appendix - Feedback course descriptions

(a) General and on programme level
- Course descriptions are rather clear and accompanied with extensive list of reading materials. At times, courses seem to be overambitious in scope (e.g. Research and Design thesis tutorial, visualization and digital design course).
- The lists of learning outcomes are rather extensive for all courses and, at times, inconsistent with the course objective and course content.
- Names, functions and responsibilities of each staff member per course is missing.
- Info on course assessments is similar and percentages are the same throughout all courses in the first 3 semesters. Group project (25%) is also listed in courses assessment sections where there is no mentioning of group work.
- Some teachers will teach in all 3 design studios: Will that help the students to acquire different modes of design inquiry and, in the process, experience different design attitudes?
- Several 'theoretical essays' and 'research papers' are asked from the students, but information on where the needed skills & knowledge are taught is missing in the Application.
- Teaching forms (they call this 'teaching methodology'): In many Universities, the number of hours per type of teaching form is made explicit, to orient both teaching staff & the students.
- Course assignments: very little detail is provided about e.g. at which scales the designs will have to be created and what exactly the course deliverables are.

(b) Course specific observations and recommendations

MLD 500
- Learning Outcomes (LO) Build and use 3-D actual and digital models -> In which course do they learn that?

MLD 510
- Course content (CC) Ramps, stairs and walls, cut and fill calculations. Is this appropriate at university Master's level?
- Bibliography: Paper by Georgi & Sarikou is from 2005 and possibly outdated for this fast-developing subject of sustainable building materials.

MLD 520
- The course title comprises 'landscape ecology' but there is little evidence in the further course description of that particular subject, the course seems to focus on plants rather than landscape ecology in the conventional sense of that term used by LE scholars such as Paul Opdam, Monica Turner and Alfonso Farina.

MLD 530
- Course Purpose and Objectives: "Landscape theory tracks the nature and origin of theories and principles in landscape architecture" -> This sentence is ambiguous with regards to 'landscape theory' as that strand of theory entails much more than only LA theory.
- Teaching methodology: Regular classroom lectures are missing from the list of activities

- Assessment: "The module will be assessed by a number of theoretical essays…" -> How realistic is it to ask for several essays to be composed in one 6 ECTS course?

MLD 540
- Course Purpose and Objective: Great to see the mentioning of "past and contemporary landscape projects" which suggest the building of projects repertoire for the students
- Course content: The scale at which projects may be executed in the this studio may range from "waterfront areas" all the way to "national parks" -> That's a very broad range of scales implying very different didactical approaches and levels of comprehension.
- Course content: Does the MLD programme consider 'Marine habitats' a suitable site for a design studio? After all, those sites are not on land and governed primarily by ecological/nature and fishery considerations. That is not to say that it is *per se* impossible to design such sites but questioning whether those sites are the best for a 1st year design studio.

MLD 550
- Course title: "Sustainable Environmental Design" is a very generic course name that does not do justice to the important and relevant focus of this course on (urban) microclimate. Please reconsider course title to better align with this important content.
- Bibliography: Possibly consider adding other LA scholars working on microclimatic design such as Joao Cortesão or Sanda Lenzholzer to the list of reading materials. Their focus on areas with more continental or (northern) sea climate may be relevant for those AUCY students that come from North of the Mediterranean Sea

MLD 600
- Course Purpose and Objectives: "Students will be studying environmental management techniques and landscape policy in projects" -> As much as those topics are relevant for LA, it is very important to make sure that knowledge on these subjects does not come at the expense of design time in the studios. Addressing those topics in other courses might work out better.

MLD 620
- Course Purpose and Objectives: The second paragraph starting with "Additional objectives… understanding and appreciation of the Cyprus region…sense of place among the region's residents… including collaboration" suggest for the students to be able and speak Greek. Is this case and does AUCY/MLD have strategies in place to deal with this otherwise?

MLD 630 (and several other courses)
- Teacher's name: C.Musacchio is listed here but she will also be teaching at least 3 other courses during the 1st semester which run parallel to the 3rd semester. How viable is that?
- Course content: The listed content to be taught in this particular course is very extensive. How realistic is it to teach and acquire that much knowledge in a 6 ECTS course?

MLD 640
- The 'International Landscape Design Workshop' is a wonderful addition to the curriculum. Earlier in the

MLD application, a one-week international excursion is mentioned and related to the course. However, this excursion is nowhere mentioned in the actual course description.

- Teaching methodology: Here, it is suggested that students will give lectures which is an interesting idea for 4th semester students. However, listing students among the people giving lectures in the course also bears potential threats for reaching the learning outcomes. It is recommended to – if applicable- turn the presentation of students into a 'course deliverable' rather than a teaching method in the course description.

MLD 650

- This course, too, is a wonderful component of the programme curriculum but the listed course content entails many things, reaching from literature review, research design, qualitative and quantitative research methods and strategies, analysis methods, data analysis strategy all the way to writing instructions. Considering the fact that this is a 3 ECTS course, the proposed course content seems much if not excessive in nature. How feasible is it for a student to acquire all the needed skills and knowledge to perform those activities?

MLD 660

- Teaching methodology: The text suggests (1st sentence) that the design program will become clear and documented as part of the preparatory thesis tutorial (MLD 650). Is that always the case or is the design program not also one of the findings of the detailed (landscape) analysis, problem identification and other activities conducted much later in the thesis trajectory?

- Teaching methodology: The last sentence states "periodic consultation between students and their advisor(s)" without any specification of the length of those tutoring sessions and their frequency. Students could undergo an important learning experience when they are in charge of allocating and planning their set (x) number of tutoring hours across the entire thesis period. Anyhow, further specification of what exactly the tutoring entails will help both students and tutors.